

HOW·NI·KAN

PEOPLE OF THE FIRE



Vol. 21, Nos. 11 & 12

Citizen Potawatomi Nation

November & December 1999



Joy to You & Yours

The spirit of the season was everywhere at the Citizen Potawatomi Nation complex during the holidays. Everyone got involved, even Chairman John A. "Rocky" Barrett, who gave Santa a helping hand at the Nation's Day Care center. In this photo by Michael Dodson, Santa has a mischievous twinkle in his eye as he talks with a skeptical young Mahnee McKinney. More holiday photos are on pages 4 and 5.

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TRIBAL TRACTS

Walking on ...

Olline Hodges

Shawnee resident Olline Hodges died Monday, December 27, 1999 in a local hospital. She was 93. Mrs. Hodges was born on May 12, 1906, in Maud, the daughter of Dee and Mae Holt.

She graduated from Shawnee High School and worked as a sales clerk in Maud, and served as city clerk in Maud. She married Ben Hodges. Mrs. Hodges was a member of the Northridge Church of Christ, Eastern Star at Maud, and Eastern Star at Weslaco, Texas. She lived in the Rio Grande Valley in Weslaco for 47 years then moved to Shawnee in 1997.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Ben Hodges; daughter, Nolene Hodges; a sister, Alma Craig; and two infant grandsons. Survivors include her two daughters and sons-in-law, Tokee and Harry Richard, Shawnee; Jan and Leonard Rowe, Camarillo, California; a brother and sister-in-law, J.D. and Bobbie Holt, Phoenix, Arizona; a sister and brother-in-law, Evelyn and John Whipple, San Angelo, Texas; six grandchildren, David Rowe, Camarillo, California; Stephen Rowe, Phillmore, California; Mike Lacey, Muskogee, Oklahoma; Sharon Lacey, Shawnee, Oklahoma; Linda Lacey, Shawnee, Oklahoma; Jan Tupps, Tulsa, Oklahoma; five great-grandchildren; and

three great-great-grandchildren.

Services were held at 11 a.m. Thursday, December 30, 1999 in Resthaven Memorial Park with Mike Shelborn officiating under the direction of Roesch-Walker Funeral Chapel of Shawnee.

Bernice Upton Lane

Bernice Upton Lane died Sunday, December 26, 1999 in Norman, Oklahoma. She was 63.

She was born in Asher, Oklahoma to Emry and Mildred Sales Upton on May 15, 1937. She graduated from Shawnee High School and attended the University of Oklahoma. She married Carlos Lane on January 8, 1955, in Chandler, Oklahoma.

Mrs. Lane worked 30 years for Norman optometrists James Ryan and Troy Flax, retiring in 1997. She was a member of New Hope Baptist Church of Norman. Preceding her in death were her parents, a sister and two brothers.

Survivors include her husband, Carlos of the home; a son and daughter-in-law, Terry and Donna Lane of Shawnee; a daughter and son-in-law, Melissa and Tony Petkoff of Payson, Arizona; a sister, Pam Yort of Shawnee; three brothers and four sisters-in-law, Clyde and Deletha Upton of Oklahoma City; Bob and Judy Upton of Dewey; Don Upton of Oklahoma City; Rosalie Upton of Oklahoma City, and Bobbie Upton of Seminole; seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Graveside services were held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, December 29, 1999 at Sunset Memorial Park with the Rev. Richard Gray officiating. Arrangements were under the direction of Primrose Funeral Service. Memorials may be made to New Hope Baptist Church at 4150 E. Robinson, Norman, Oklahoma 73026 or Vista Care Family Hospice, 4900 Richmond Square, Suite 203, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73118 in her name.

Dane Davis

Services for Dane Davis, 83, of Noble, were held at 10 a.m. Wednesday, December 1, 1999 at McMahan's Funeral Home Chapel in Noble with the Rev. Bobby Joe Smith officiating. Interment followed at the 100F Cemetery in Norman, Oklahoma under the direction of McMahan's Funeral Home.

Mrs. Davis died November 28, 1999 at Norman Regional Hospital. She was born November 23, 1916, on the family farm near Corbett. She attended school at Valley Grove and Lexington. While in elementary school, she won a state jump

rope contest. Mrs. Davis was involved in many activities but loved cooking, her family and the Noble Senior Citizens Center. She was on the rolls of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She was an avid bowler and, at age 75, participated in the Senior-Citizens National Bowling Tournament and was featured on the cover of the National Bowling League magazine. At the time, she was ranked 26th nationwide.

Her first husband, W.E. "Wilbur" Dragoo, preceded her in death in 1971. She married Paul Davis in 1980. She was a member of the First Christian Church.

Survivors include her husband, Paul Davis, of the home; a son, John Dragoo, and his wife, Kaylynn, of Norman; a stepson, Don Davis, and his wife Marileah, of Norman; a granddaughter, Suzette Barta, and her husband, John, of Perkins; a grandson, John D. Dragoo, and wife Janet, of Henryetta; four great-grandchildren, Alec, and Brandi Barta and Courtney and Kyle Dragoo; five brothers and four sisters-in-law, Verl Higbee and wife, Helen, L.B. Higbee, L.C. Higbee and wife, LaVera, and Hill Higbee and wife, Juanita, all of Noble, and Ron Higbee and wife, Sue, of Norman; three sisters, Idell DeHeer, Nonie Glenn and Patsy Smith, all of Noble; and numerous nephews, nieces and friends.

The family has designated the Noble Senior Citizens Center as appropriate for memorial donations.

Pete "Dutch" Veitenheimer Jr.

Shawnee resident Pete "Dutch" Veitenheimer, Jr. died Wednesday, December 15, 1999 in Shawnee. He was 76.

He was born July 19, 1923, in Sacred Heart, Oklahoma, to Pete Paul Veitenheimer, Sr. and Grace Mae Bruno Veitenheimer. He married Ruby Ray May 3, 1960, in Oklahoma City. She preceded him in death August 9, 1998.

Veitenheimer grew up in the Sacred Heart area and attended Sacred Heart Catholic School. He was a retired carpenter and construction worker. He served in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. He was a member of St. Benedict Catholic Church, former commander of American Legion Post 16 and former senior commander of the VFW Post 1317.

He was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers, Emmitt and William Veitenheimer. Survivors include four sons, Gary Veitenheimer, Cromwell, Pete Veitenheimer III, Tecumseh, John Veitenheimer, of the

home, and William Veitenheimer, Shawnee; daughters Sherry Criswell, Oklahoma City, Tammy Swantek and Dana Veitenheimer Smith, both of Shawnee; step-daughter Donna Baker, Texas; 16 grandchildren; one great-grandchild; brother, Matt Veitenheimer, California; and sister Violet Veitenheimer, Jones.

Graveside services were held at 10 a.m. Saturday, December 18, 1999 at Calvary Cemetery with the Rev. Maurus P. Jaeb, O.S.B., under the direction of Cooper Funeral Home.

James Koley Martin

James Koley Martin, 36, of Tucson, passed away on October 23, 1999. He was a loving husband, devoted father and beloved son and brother. Mr. Koley was a master craftsman, avid fisherman and hunter, golf enthusiast and longtime employee of Pima County. He is survived by his wife, Karen and two children, Amy and Rusty; grandmother, Doris Donovan of Tucson, Arizona; parents, Paul "Sut" and Kathy Martin of Tucson; sister, Kendra Linaman of Tucson; brother, Kirk Martin of Odessa, Texas; and sister Karreen Martin of Tucson.

Safely Home

I am home in heaven, dear ones; Oh, so happy and so bright! There is perfect joy and beauty in this everlasting light. All the pain and grief is over, Every restless tossing passed; I am now at peace forever, Safely home in heaven at last. There is work still waiting for you, So you must not idly stand; Do it now, while life remaineth — You shall rest in God's own land. When the work is all completed, He will gently call you Home; Oh, the rapture of that meeting, Oh, the joy to see you come!

HOW-NI-KAN PEOPLE OF THE FIRE

The HowNiKan is published by the Business Committee of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation with offices at 1601 Gordon Cooper Drive, Shawnee, Oklahoma 74801.

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DONATIONS TO THE HowNiKAN

Max & Vivian Rhodd,
Winfield, KS - \$10
Marcene E. Spencer,
Garden Grove, CA -
\$25
Rev. Roy E. and
Laberta Paslay,
Topeka, KS - \$25



Regional Office Directory

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(INCLUDES ALASKA & HAWAII)

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REGION 3 - NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Vacant

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REGION 9 - MIDWEST

(INCLUDES EASTERN NEBRASKA & EASTERN KANSAS)

Vacant

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The Citizen Potawatomi Nation is divided into different "Regional Offices" to help cover the extended membership across the nation. Originally labeled merely by region names, regional boundaries were established in late 1997 using the US Postal Service "3 digit" Zip code areas. Region '0' is generally considered Oklahoma while the other states that are not numbered currently do not have an official "Region" designator.

REGIONAL REPORTS

Northern California

Bosho, Niconi,

This may come as a surprise to you, but I have decided to resign my position as Regional Director. It has been a privilege to serve you. I would like to thank Chairman Barrett and the Business Committee for the opportunity I have had to learn much about my tribal family and about myself in this journey of almost five years.

Our Regional Meeting site

and other details have been taken care of, so please continue to plan to attend on March 4th. You will be getting your invitation soon. It is the one chance each year to hear the news first-hand from our Business Committee and to be able to ask questions and learn more.

It is also a great opportunity to connect with other tribal members and find out more

about your family tree and heritage. I will hope to see you there.

Until another director is chosen, the folks in Shawnee are always there to help with the questions you have. I am not moving, so feel free to drop me a line. I wish you all well and hope that our paths continue to cross in the future.

Bamamine,

— Jennifer J. Porter

1999-2000

Regional

Council Schedule



Denver	Sept. 25, 1999
Eastern United States	Oct. 16, 1999
Dallas	Nov. 13, 1999
Southern California	Jan. 15, 2000
Phoenix	Feb. 5, 2000
Northern California	March 4, 2000
Houston	March 25, 2000
Seattle/Portland	April 15, 2000
Kansas	May 13, 2000

MULTI-REGIONAL ART COMPETITIONS 1999-2000

GRAND PRIZE ART COMPETITION

\$150 First Prize • \$100 Second Prize • \$50 Third Prize

- All enrolled Citizen Potawatomi Nation Tribal Members are eligible to enter the Multi-Regional Art Competitions.
- Entries must be the work of the artist without assistance and must have been completed within two years of the Art Competition date.
- Eligible artists must submit their art in the region in which they reside. If an artist fails to submit his art in the region in which he resides, he is not eligible to enter any other Multi-Regional Art Competition.
- Each artist is limited to, but not required to submit, three (3) entries.
- Entries must be submitted to the regional director for display at the regional meeting.
- No entry fee or age requirements are placed on the artists. Artists of all ages are encouraged to enter the art competitions.
- Only one prize will be paid to each contestant. A contestant who wins more than one prize will be awarded the higher of the prizes.
- Artists who win first, second, or third prize, at any Multi-Regional Art Competition may advance their winning piece(s) of art to the Grand Prize Art Competition to be held in June.

Painting * Photography * Prints * Sculpture
Beadwork * Jewelry * Pottery * Fabric Art

For more information contact: Dennette Brand-Bare at 1-800-880-9880 or Citizen Potawatomi Nation Art Competition, 1601 S. Gordon Cooper Dr., Shawnee, OK 74801, or by e-mail at DBrand@Potawatomi.org

the Spirit of Christmas



Sunny and David Stevens sneak a little playtime at the CPN Early Head Start before Santa arrives.



Corri Cooper examines the goodies Santa left behind.



Above Left: Early Head Start youngsters were excited by the arrival of the Jolly Elf of the North. Above Right: Children from the CPN Day Care Center performed Christmas carols for an audience of their parents and tribal employees. Below Right: Deputy Administrator Bob Trousdale delivered a rousing rendition of "Twas The Night Before Christmas."



Left: Tessa Salazar looked dapper as a candy cane in the Day Care Center Christmas presentation. Above: Tina Ticer and April Morris of the Early Head Start staff have children enthralled by Christmas stories.



Happy Christmas

Right: Vickie Canfield and Shirl Eastep presented certificates of appreciation to CPN Business Committee members at the annual employee Christmas party.



Vickie Lofton and Dee Wood added a musical note to the Christmas Dinner.

Joyce Abel, CPN Clinic Director, accepts a plaque recognizing her 15 years of dedicated service to the Potawatomi people.



Left: Patsy Cooper and husband Ron share a private moment at the Christmas Dinner. Patsy handles education programs for the Nation. Center: Rhonda Butcher of the Self-Governance Office and husband Dr. Michael Butcher thoroughly enjoyed the Dinner, as did Supreme Court Justice Phil Lujan, his wife Karen (at his left) and Cherie Trousdale (right), wife of Deputy Administrator Bob Trousdale.



The Citizen Potawatomi Nation employee family continues to grow, as evidenced in this view of just part of the turnout for the Christmas festivities.

Potawatomi: to be or not to be?

I grew up in predominantly white rural Kansas aware that I was a member of what was then called the Citizen Band Potawatomi Tribe of Oklahoma, but clueless as to what that meant. My relatives in Oklahoma were family, not "Indians." They didn't wear loincloths, beat tomtoms, or raise their right hands and say, "How" whenever I went to visit – all things the mass media would have had me believe "real" Indians did. It was, and continues to be, hard for me to sort through images of Indianness to form a coherent picture of what it is to be Potawatomi.

By common perception, there are two avenues through which I could claim to be Potawatomi – cultural and biological. By cultural definition, I could claim to be Potawatomi through outsiders – if non-group members identify me as such; through self-identification – if I identify myself as such; or through the group's definition – if the group (in this case, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation) identifies me as a member based upon their criteria. Criteria for Potawatomi identity could include shared cultural traits such as distinct language, worldview, way of life, dress and shared history.

Based on a biologically defined Potawatomi identity, I would still have to rely on a culturally constructed definition of "how Potawatomi" I am. To be "biologically" Potawatomi is to conform to a culturally determined notion of what percentage of Potawatomi ancestry constitutes "Potawatomi." By this method, called "blood quantum," I could claim to be a certain percentage Potawatomi. The actual blood quantum would have to be legally "provable" through official documents, which show direct descendancy from Potawatomi ancestors. In the United States today, a blood quantum of 1/16 is usually acceptable as sufficiently "Indian" to be labeled a "minority." Depending on which figures are to be believed, I am either 1/16, 1/32, 1/64, or 1/128 "Indian." Several of my ancestors found it advisable to lie and say they were less "Indian" than they actually were, given the political situation at the time, so I am "officially" 1/128 Potawatomi.

Under many laws, only if I am 1/16 "Indian" could I call myself such, and I cannot "prove" that I am 1/16. However, I am a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, so I am Indian by law – sometimes. Which definition should define my ethnic identity? Should it be the fiction of a "biologically" determined identity, which draws an arbitrary, culturally defined line and uses this line to tell me my ethnicity, ignoring the three culture-based identifiers I mentioned earlier? Or should a group have the right to identify its own members?

If the "biological" definition were to take precedence, it would continue the injustice of one culture dominating another, which many anthropologists are striving to correct. To decide that the "biological" definition of Potawatomi identity –

Laura Bathurst is a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and has a B.A. in anthropology and Spanish from Kansas State University. She was a graduate student in anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, when this article appeared in the Spring 1998 issue of Winds of Change.

which is actually a thinly disguised cultural definition – should be the prevailing definition is to disempower, once again, a people who have repeatedly been disempowered since Europeans first arrived in the Americas. The only fair and culturally sensitive way to determine ethnicity is for groups to have power to set their own criteria for membership.

Based upon the four ways through which I could come to call myself Potawatomi outlined above, I currently fill three of the four. I don't officially fulfill the 1/16 blood quantum requirement, but I am identified by the United States government as Potawatomi because of my tribal membership, self-identified as a Potawatomi Indian, and accepted by the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, which has granted me membership. Since I fulfill these three criteria, why do I still feel apologetic when I claim to be Native American? Is it not enough that I fulfill established criteria set forth by my tribe and the U.S. government? I still do not feel like I have the right to call myself a "real Indian."

My ambivalence toward my Native American identity reflects my consciousness of the motivations behind my desire to embrace it. When I am asked my ethnicity on legal forms, I have a legal right to fill in the bubble marked Native American, but why should I identify more with my Native heritage than my European ancestry? What purpose does it serve? I can say that I am "Indian," but does that mean I should? Or is my Native identity solely a construct (although a legal one) to allow me special treatment as a "minority?" Why do I say I'm Potawatomi?

In considering motivations behind Native rights movements, neither the subjugated nor the oppressor should be demonized or romanticized. My desire to identify myself as a Potawatomi Indian reflects complex political circumstances as well as

the emotional benefits gained from identification with and membership in a group. If there were no ramifications, personal as well as tribal, negative as well as positive, by my checking the box marked "American Indian," I doubt that I would think the issue important enough to warrant a paper. If there were no benefits, I doubt that I would check the box and therefore have the need to write this essay.

I am not the only one struggling with these identity issues. Looking deeper into Potawatomi history sheds light upon the role that the larger political situation plays in a group's self-defined ethnicity. Expanding the criteria for group membership can be an adaptive mechanism, benefiting both those previously excluded and the original members. However, such an expression also weakens the cohesive bonds of the group, pushing the limits of what "ethnicity" means. My tribe, the Citizen Potawatomi, is an excellent example of both the benefits and detriments of "diluting" the group.

From their first contact with Europeans to their acceptance or rejection of land allotments, my ancestors have both embraced and resisted the dominant culture, adapting to changing circumstances and losing most of the pre-contact cultural practices. I am part of a large movement by many Potawatomi today who are attempting to go "back to the blanket," reconstructing a unique Potawatomi identity. Many of us are looking to early records of Potawatomi contact with Europeans in order to find out what "true" Potawatomi were like. However, when we look to past records in our search for ourselves, we not only have to be aware of European ideology that infiltrates such records, but we also have to accept findings that sometimes invalidate our identity.

Like many Native American tribes, the Potawatomi considered themselves superior to other groups. The Neshnabek, the True People, as we called ourselves, explained our origins with the Earth Diver myth:

"In the beginning, the Old People taught, there was no land, only water. Floating on this Great Sea was a birchbark canoe. In it, weeping, sat a man, Our Grandfather. He wept because he had no idea of his fate."

In the story, Muskrat, Beaver, Snapping Turtle, and Otter dove to the bottom of the sea to bring dirt which the man, the Master of All Life, Wiske, formed into an island.

As a result of diverse coping mechanisms used when Europeans and then the United States pressured the Potawatomi for precious resources, Wiske's people are now separated into several "islands" after 350 years of both accommodation and resistance.

Today, groups of Potawatomi have their respective centers in Oklahoma, Southern Michigan, Northern Michigan, Kansas, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Canada. These diverse groups of Potawatomi Indians have chosen varied strategies to hold onto their

a writer's reflections on ethnicity

"islands." Some are now working toward reuniting into one cohesive group again, but others believe that our respective differences are better reflected and our interests are better served as separate entities.

Archeological and linguistic evidence suggests that the Potawatomi were once part of a Central Algonquian-speaking population, which included the Chippewa, or Ojibwa, and the Ottawa. Just as changing circumstances have resulted in the separation of contemporary Potawatomi into smaller groups, so, too, did the evolving ancestors result in an earlier split of these traditionally joined Algonquian-speakers.

The Potawatomi ranged throughout the Great Lakes region during the 1600s and 1700s as tensions with enemy tribes and competition over scarce resources demanded. These included pressures put on them by the Iroquois, who had entered the fur trade and acquired guns, playing their part in the Beaver Wars. The Potawatomi spread into what is now Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Illinois. In 1642, they were near the East End of Lake Superior; in 1654, they were recorded living in Wisconsin; in 1670 they populated the island around Green Bay. As they spread throughout the Great Lakes region, they formed geographically scattered groups which would later be permanently separated, both culturally and politically.

A close look at the kinship system of my ancestors as it was recorded when they lived in the Great Lakes region could weaken my claim to be Potawatomi if a fluid concept of ethnicity is not accepted. The Potawatomi were strongly patrilineal, with membership in a clan traced through a line of men to a mythical ancestor in the distant past. If this system were still accepted as the defining mechanism for Potawatomi ethnicity, then I could not claim to be Potawatomi because my father is not Potawatomi. I derive my Potawatomi ethnicity from my mother and my mother's mother. However, the Potawatomi have redefined, several times, what constitutes a Potawatomi Indian.

A casual observer might be tempted to argue that the "original" definition of Potawatomi ethnicity should be upheld, and that we should not be able to change our self-definition as a group. Such a person would reject attempts of groups to restructure membership requirements – restructuring that is currently taking place in Indian Country when groups like the Apache decide to adopt criteria for membership similar to that of today's Citizen Potawatomi, where the only requirements is to be a descendent of a tribal member. However, an argument for maintaining the "original" requirements fails to recognize that cultures are in constant flux. Cultures are adaptive mechanisms that change as circumstances demand. To choose one moment in history and claim that the state of a culture at that moment is the "original state" is to believe in a fallacy. Thus, we

must accept the right of groups to constantly adjust to new circumstances, redefining their collective identities as they see fit. The Citizen Potawatomi – and groups like the Apache – have seized upon their right to do just that, to reconstruct membership requirements and better adapt to complex political situations.

One benefit of easing membership restrictions is to increase group size, a characteristic that could be deemed more important than upholding a "traditional," uniform sense of group identity. This is the path my people, the people of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, have chosen. By this choice, we have created a large population base which reaches into "mainstream" United States culture, increasing the chances of ensuring a continuing Potawatomi ethnicity by appealing to people like me. However, by choosing this path, we also change what it means to be Potawatomi.

I do not speak Potawatomi, nor did I grow up in Indian Country; however, I vote in our tribal elections and participate in our tribal councils, thus altering the future of our tribe to reflect values I gained outside of Indian Country. This is the route my people have chosen, but it has ramifications that may or may not have been foreseen. It is ironic that the very step that increases the political power of the Citizen Potawatomi – by increasing its numbers and its members in power positions in the dominant society – also decreases the dire need for such political power. (When people are not marginalized, degraded, and set apart as "Indian," as most of the Citizen Potawatomi are not, the imperative need for special status as "Indians" – to right ongoing wrongs – also declines.)

By opening up tribal membership to those already assimilated into mainstream United States culture, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation weakens any claim to special status founded on continuing marginalization. We are more able, however, to regain control of our resources and aggressively pursue tribal goals. We are more able to reconstruct a Potawatomi identity. We can look into the past for culture heroes of our heritage – heroes like Wiske, waking him from his slumber to once again send the earth divers to the bottom of the sea, creating a new island for us, the Neshnabek, the "true people." This time, however, Wiske can create an island for us within land, not water, and this time we can understand that we are one of many "true peoples." Our way is not the only way, but it is our way, and we are choosing it. In the end, this is all any group has the right to ask: that they be allowed to govern themselves, as they see fit – as we see fit.

So it is with my people, and so it will be with other groups, because as groups search for effective ways to seize control of their own lives and gain political clout, strategies similar to those adopted by the Citizen Potawatomi Nation will

undoubtedly be utilized by other groups. Just as the Apache have recently decided to restructure their membership criteria, accepting descendency as the only requirement for membership and opening themselves up for even faster culture change, so too, will other groups. This restructuring will stretch the boundaries of the "Indian problem" making it even more difficult to sort through its complexities.

When does the situation of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation change from an issue of the Fourth World to a purely political issue of fully assimilated people claiming dual citizenship for purely economic reasons? Some people will argue that tribes that choose the route of the Citizen Potawatomi should lose their entitlement to "special" treatment under the law when the majority of their members are successfully integrated into the mainstream society; however, such a stand would impose a naïve idea of what it is to be "Native" upon people who are refusing to carry this projection of "savagery" for the larger population. To move to take away the hard won rights and privileges of Native Americans just because we refuse to act out the "noble savage" or "wild Indian" roles romanticized by the media and many members of the dominant culture would be unjust.

Each group deserves the right to choose for itself its membership criteria. Each group must weigh, for itself, the potential results, both positive and negative, of strategies like that of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Does the group want the benefits of larger numbers when it may be "watered down" and lose its "traditional" sense of ethnicity? Is the group willing to embrace new members and renegotiate what it means to be a member of that group? Or is the group willing to chance a continuing decline in numbers, which may result in complete extinction? Each group must be allowed to decide for itself. The dominant culture should not push alien ideas of how "the Natives" should appear or act upon such groups. My people have chosen their path. Now I, and all other "new members" must learn/create what it means to be Potawatomi.

So I've come full circle – from feeling like I had an illegitimate claim to my American Indian identity to believing that the feeling of illegitimacy is exactly what I share with "my people," the Citizen Potawatomi. We do share a common identity, a common ethnicity. We are all Citizen Potawatomi struggling to reconcile images of "Indianness" shoved upon us by outsiders with what we see in the mirror each day. We, and our ancestors, are the recipients of that dynamic birthright called culture, and ours is chipping away at stereotypes of what a "culture" truly is. We are proof that a culture is truly an adaptive mechanism that, if successful, allows people to overcome obstacles and adjust to rapid changes.



From The Chairman

By John A. "Rocky" Barrett

This issue of the HowNiKan is a combined November-December holiday issue that will allow us to catch up to the current month with our HowNiKan publications. The January issue will follow in seven days after this issue is received. As is usually the case with any organization, tribal business slows as the holiday approaches. It is also a time for reflection on the growth and resultant changes we have seen over the past year and contemplation on why our tribe has avoided the disruption evidenced in so many other tribes that usually goes with change.

We are fortunate in having many years of experience on the Business Committee. This experience has resulted in an attitude of seeking cooperation and team effort. Like any group of people who have to subrogate their personal preferences to arrive at a consensus, there are rough spots. We are, all five of us, very human. After ten or more years of working and traveling together, I am sure each of us has some characteristic that grates on another. I am grateful that the other four members have been so patient with me. Hopefully they will continue. And, like any group of people who have to work together for a long time, some steam needs to blow off occasionally. What has served us so well is that all of our Business Committee members are professional enough to recognize that this kind of behavior is simply human and necessary for the dynamics of a group. It has not resulted in disputes that have

set us back as a government. I pray to God that this will continue until we each have served our time. I also pray that those who succeed us have the same determination to make it work.

This holiday season was a blessing for me in getting to be around the kids at the tribe and my grandkids. It is so fascinating to watch them react to the newness of the traditions of the holidays new foods, clothes, relatives, and celebrations. You can see the train of emotions in their eyes: first, wariness, then delight, then a quick look around to see if everyone else is feeling and seeing the same things they are, then excitement that everyone else is excited too. There is no way to not be a part of that excitement if you can reach in a pull out that little bit of child left in each us. Another holiday treat is to watch your own kids prepare Christmas and Thanksgiving for their kids. How many of your own traditions do they carry on? What do they do new? How do they feel when they get their children an elaborate gift and watch them with the box instead? How do they feel when they see their kids deal with their father as Grandpa? Great fun and the chance to re-live it all again. Thanks Santa Claus, for these kinds of gifts. I savor them.

Megwetch, Igwehyin

John Barrett

From Our Mailbox

I, Sue Marley, daughter of Robert Pawnee and Shirley Adamson, would like to give my most sincere thanks to the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and to everyone else who has contributed their time and efforts for our family during this tragic time of our lives.

Once again, Thank You for all your heartfelt wishes and prayers.

Sincerely,

Sue Ann Marley & Family

(Editor's note: Mr. Pawnee is an employee of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and a fabulously talented artist.)

Dear Scholarship Committee,

Thank you very much for the scholarship help you've awarded me. I truly appreciate the thoughtfulness you give us college students. Our family enjoys, and looks forward to receiving your newspaper.

Jamie Ann Erler
Lansing Community College



New Christian Visitation Team Poses In Front Of The Mission Church

Tribal group seeks to help others

Christian Visitation Team (CVT) is a team made up of people with the purpose of spreading God's word and helping others. Our goal is to help tribal members and employees in any way we can, giving all the glory to God. We have 14 people on the CVT at this time. The team is on a volunteer basis with hopes of people wanting to fulfill their Christian duties. You can contact Mike Wood through e-mail (mwood@potawatomi.org) or by phone at (405) 275-4471 (golf shop) if you are interested or any of the members listed.

Our current CVT members are Esther Lowden, Ginger Johnson, Teri Ramsey, Carrie Kieffer, Carol Nuttle, Margaret Zientek, Carol Clay-Levi, Deborah Galbraith, Marla Taylor, Amy Stinson, Patsy Cooper, Marcia Green, John Bunch, Gary Smith and Gene Lambert (Region 5).

These are some of the expectations of CVT:

1. Help anyone with their spiritual needs in whatever capacity it is needed.
2. Visit tribal members and employees in the hospital or home.
3. Visit or assist tribal members and employees in any way we can with a death in the family.
4. Help or assist anyone with a drug, alcohol, family or marital problem when the word of God (the sword of the Spirit) can be of some help.
5. Help needy families.

These are just a few of the ideas that we have come up with. CVT will no doubt have other good ideas brought forward that we will implement into our overall plan. CVT has sent out many get well cards, visitations, food baskets, sunshine baskets and we get many prayer requests, which are of course confidential. God has a plan for all his children. We just need to strive to find out what that plan is through prayer, meditation on God, study of God's word, and worship.

I have heard it mentioned that we are one big family at our work place. In order to be a happy family we need God in our daily lives at our work place. I have hopes that CVT will give that spiritual guidance with the helping hand of God our Father through Christ our Lord.

In Christ,

Mike Wood